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The Eagle

Voluntary Service Central Office Newsletter
Leaders in Volunteer Management

From the Director

Happy Veterans Day!!

I want to personally "Thank" those who have proudly served our country! I know that for many of us in VAVS, every day is Veterans Day, but November 11th is the day our country formally recognizes Veterans Day.

I know many of you have a LOT going on during the month and we are no different here in VACO. For the past few years we hosted concerts during National Salute to Veteran Patients. These events were sponsored nationally by Help Hospitalized Veterans and locally by MANY organizations and individuals. This year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is hosting a concert, a "street party" if you will for Veterans Day. He took the suggestion from Mike Lynch and I am sure did not hesitate after hearing his wife (a VAVS volunteer for the past two years at the Baltimore concert) speak highly of the concerts she attended. Kool and the Gang and Chi-Lites will perform in the street to celebrate Veterans Day on November 10th.

VAVS will have a prominent role in this concert! There are about 20 VAVS staff who will be in attendance and will serve a number of different roles to make the event successful for the Veteran patients in attendance. My sincere thanks to all who will serve as "worker bees"! I hope to give you a report on the concert next month...I am sure it will be a fabulous report!

Again, thanks to all who have served and thanks to their families for their sacrifice as well!

Laura B. Belur



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“Veterans Day”... This Day in History

By Historian Darlene Richardson, History Office, VHA Central Office

Forty years ago, on October 25, 1971, the first observance of Veterans Day on the fourth Monday in October took place.

Since the early 1940s, various groups had lobbied Congress to move public holidays to Monday or Friday—like many European countries did—so that government employees could enjoy long weekends. They claimed it would promote travel and commerce. Their efforts finally succeeded during the Vietnam War era when Congress created “uniform annual observances” for a majority of federal holidays—shifting them to Mondays. On June 28, 1968, Public Law 90-363 changed all but four holidays: New Years Day, Independence Day (4th of July), Thanksgiving, and Christmas remained intact. As a result, Veterans Day was moved to the fourth Monday in October, effective in 1971.

This law produced a ripple effect within state governments, as many of them followed the federal government’s lead and changed Veterans Day for state purposes, as well. However, not all states changed their holidays—which caused confusion. New York honored the original November 11th observance, so in 1974, some offices were closed on October 29th (for the federal observance) while others closed on November 11th (for the state observance). By 1974, barely three years after the law took effect, nearly 40 states had restored Veterans Day to its original date of November 11th.



Veterans Day held at the end of October was short-lived, lasting only seven years from the law’s effective date in 1971. Veterans and Veterans’ organizations rallied to change the law back, claiming that the day’s historical significance (the end of World War 1) was diminished when Congress changed the holiday to suit commercial interests. As a result of the uproar, remaining states changed Veterans Day back to November 11 and soon the Federal government followed suit.

In 1975 President Gerald Ford officially restored Veterans Day back to November 11th, effective beginning in 1978, and that is where it has remained ever since.



Old Professors and Sailors Never Fade Away, They Continue to Serve Their Fellow Veterans!

By Garland "Gar" Wiggs , New Volunteer, Salem VAMC

After a 41-year college teaching career, retiring 1 June, I have become a Salem VAMC Volunteer serving at the newly opened Wytheville CBOC. I work in conjunction with Donna Lambert, the Salem VAMC MyHealtheVet Coordinator, as the MyHealtheVet Volunteer at the new community-based site, helping my fellow Veterans learn how to access the MyHealtheVet Program on their home computers. In addition, during my Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10a-2p volunteer schedule, I have other volunteer assignments provided by the Clinic's Acting Manager, Christina Beaver.

Never satisfied with being a "rocking chair-type" of retiree, I contacted Ann Benois, Chief of Voluntary Service at Salem VAMC, in early December 2010 to learn how I might become a Volunteer upon my coming retirement in 2011 at the soon-to-open Wytheville VA CBOC.

My "retirement dream job" has finally become a reality!



Local TV Station Names VA Volunteer "Hidden Hero"

By Rhonda Smith, Robley Rex VAMC

Robley Rex VA Medical Center Volunteer Estel Cochran was named Fox41 Hidden Hero for September. Estel has volunteered at VA every Monday afternoon for the past six years, transporting patients and lab specimens and whatever else is needed. Even at 90 years old, Estel is never idle. Between runs, she knits toboggans for the homeless. Most weeknights you will find her dancing with a group at a nursing home or some other community activity.



Ted Phillips, the VA Volunteer who nominated Estel for the award, says that she is always the first to answer a call when it comes in. He is impressed with her kindness, upbeat attitude and her ease in communicating with the Veterans.

Always modest and humble, Estel told the TV reporter, "I just feel like I'm doing something worthwhile and if I can put a smile on somebody's face when I wheel them around or something that's rewarding." She said she wants to make a difference in the lives of those who are often forgotten.



November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 Semper Paratus USMC Day V4V Street Concert	11 HAPPY VETERANS DAY	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Happy Thanksgiving	25	26
27	28	29	30			



"Every day thousands of unsung heroes bring
CARING and COMPASSION
to the lives of millions.

Their names are never featured in the headlines, but our world would be a much darker place without them."

-Charles Devlin

The VAVS family would like to say
"THANK YOU" for all you do.

Happy Bosses Day!

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